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ABSTRACT

One of a series on library services to disadvantaged adults, this guide explains the use of deposit collections, small library collections placed in easily accessible locations. A collection of materials in a familiar place is one way to make information available to people who don't visit the library and to encourage them to come. The library staff must become familiar with the neighborhoods in which disadvantaged adults live and identify the most frequently visited places for deposit collection sites. The collections should include easy-to-read materials chosen to meet adult information and recreation needs. To continue to be effective, the collections must be maintained regularly. Book costs for the collections may range from $15 to $50. (Author/PF)

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LIBRARY SERVICE GUIDES

Appalachian Adult Education Center

DEPOSIT COLLECTIONS

FOR DISADVANTAGED ADULTS

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APPALACHIAN ADULT EDUCATION CENTER

Public Library Training Institutes
Library Service Guide No. 4

DEPOSIT COLLECTIONS FOR DISADVANTAGED ADULTS

by

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Preface

This guide is one of a series on library services to disadvantaged adults. The purpose of the series is to explore alternative ways public libraries can expand services to this special group.

Each guide attempts to recognize the differences among public library budgets, staff size and training, and the differences among the communities libraries serve. Each guide deals with a particular service and, where possible, suggests several alternative ways the library can provide that service to disadvantaged adults. The library, then, can and should further adapt the suggestions to fit the resources and needs of its local community.

The guides combine (1) a thorough search of the library literature; (2) the knowledge of professional librarians, who wrote many of the guides and evaluated the entire series; and (3) the experience of the Appalachian Adult Education Center (AAEC) in designing interagency educational programs for disadvantaged adults.

The AAEC has worked with state, regional, and local public libraries in seven states in projects funded by the Bureau of Libraries and Learning Resources of the U.S. Office of Education. In one project, four urban and three rural centers demonstrated ways public libraries and adult basic education programs could improve their services to disadvantaged adults by coordinating efforts in reader guidance, recruitment, library orientation, community referral, and in the selection, use, and delivery of materials. The AAEC also conducted institutes in local public libraries in seven states in designing and implementing library services for disadvantaged adults.

Work on those and other projects led to three conclusions, upon which the guides are based: (1) that undereducated adults need information and services to help solve problems; (2) that the public library can meet those needs through adjustments in procedures and interagency cooperation; and (3) that the materials and services required for disadvantaged adults are useful and useable to all adults.

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DEFINING THE TERMS

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ABE—adult basic education—instruction for adults 16 and over who have not completed high school. ABE may be offered in public schools, in adult learning centers, by community colleges, by volunteers or church groups, or with vocational education programs. The content of ABE ranges from the level of the non-reader through high school equivalency, and may include instruction in life coping skills areas (consumerism, employment, housing, health, child care).

Coping skills—the abilities (1) to define an everyday problem as an information need; (2) to search for and find information related to the problem; (3) to process and retain the information; and (4) to apply the information toward a solution of the problem.

Deposit collection—a selected group of materials set up in a place chosen for its accessibility to a particular group. Materials might by books, pamphlets, records, pictures, tapes, games, magazines, newspapers. Places for deposit collections might be businesses, schools, waiting rooms, bus stations, hospitals, adult basic education classes, correctional institutions.

Disadvantaged adult—a person sixteen years old or older who is out of school

with less than a high school diploma, who reads below the tenth grade level, or whose family income falls below an index of poverty.

Rotating collection—a deposit collection that is regularly moved from place to place to make it accessible to more people.

INTRODUCTION

Many disadvantaged adults have never been inside a library. They may think the library has nothing they want or need; they may find the library building threatening; they may have little free time from the press of adult responsibilities; or they may not have transportation to get to the library.

Serving Non-Users

In any case, disadvantaged adults are not likely to become library users unless they learn what the library has to offer. A deposit collection of materials in a familiar place is one way to make information accessible to people who don't visit the library, and to encourage them to come. Some users of deposit collections will become users of branch and main libraries.

Providing Information

Besides introducing non-users to the public library, deposit collections can provide disadvantaged adults with important information they need but are not getting from other sources, and with materials at an easy-to-understand reading level. Disadvantaged users may find for the first time that the library does have something for them, that it is free, and that they don't have to go out of the neighborhood to use it.

Deposit collections may be the only way the library can reach some of the disadvantaged adults in the community.

As with other services, the public library, at least initially, must take its materials and services to disadvantaged adults where they are.

Deposit collections of library materials are also important to the programs of health and social service agencies, hospitals, community action centers, correctional institutions, and adult basic education classes and learning centers. Library materials enrich the ABE curriculum, and provide important information on jobs, medical and social security applications, legal problems, and on available local services. Deposit collections of small dictionaries, almanacs, Bibles, sports stories, and magazines, for example, might be located in stores, barber shops, laundromats, and churches to provide information and recreation to disadvantaged adults.

Teachers Collections

An alternative to a regular deposit collection for adult basic education programs is a rotating teacher's collection. Rather than the librarian delivering the materials to the class or learning center, the teacher comes to the library to select materials to fit the needs of the group. The librarian can help by pointing out special or new materials. The teacher then checks out the materials for as long as they will be needed, takes them to the adult classroom or learning center, and returns them to check out a new selection.

Possible Problems

Most libraries report very positive results from their experiences with deposit collections. The only problems seem to be the reluctance of some proprietors and institutions to accept the collection, loss of some materials, and damage to equipment. But these are isolated incidents. Generally the collections are enthusiastically accepted and heavily used. Losses are usually not significant since many deposit collections are made up of paperbacks and free or inexpensive pamphlets. The material does wear out but it is seldom stolen.

Some librarians fear that deposit collections will make users think that the deposit collection is all there is to the public library. But publicity can easily correct that impression, through signs or leaflets with the collections, newspaper announcements, and tours of the library.

This guide suggests ways the public library can establish deposit collections for disadvantaged adults. It is divided into six major sections:

1. placing the collections

2. assembling the collections

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3. maintaining the collections

4. costs

5. what other libraries have done

6. suggested readings

PLACING THE COLLECTION

If the library has decided to serve disadvantaged adults through deposit collections of special materials in accessible places, its next decisions are

- where to place collections;
- how to work with other community establishments in placing the collections;
- how many collections it can afford;
- what kinds of materials to use;
- how the deposit collections will be maintained.

This section suggests how the library might choose locations for deposit collections, and how it might work with other community agencies in placing the collections.

Since its budget may limit the number of deposit collections the library can place, it is important to choose locations for the collections carefully, so that each one reaches as many disadvantaged adults as possible.

Experience will show which locations are well used and which are not. The best bets are places disadvantaged adults visit regularly, and where they are likely to

spend time waiting, such as the waiting rooms of service agencies and hospitals. Some very busy places like large grocery stores may not be best, since adults have other concerns when they go there.

Find Out About the Neighborhood

To pick the best places for deposit collections for disadvantaged adults, the library staff will need to *become familiar with the neighborhoods where disadvantaged adults live, and identify places in the community where disadvantaged adults go for services, shopping, and recreation.*

Make a list of potential locations for deposit collections by identifying the locations of the following establishments in the community that disadvantaged adults are likely to visit. The list should include the local address of each establishment, and the name of the person to contact to make arrangements to place the collection.

Possible Sites

- adult basic education programs
- social service and health agencies
- special projects working with the disadvantaged
- stores in disadvantaged neighborhoods
- businesses and factories where disadvantaged adults work
- churches in disadvantaged neighborhoods
- laundromats
- hospitals, clinics, nursing homes
- correctional institutions
- community centers
- recreation centers
- pool rooms
- schools where disadvantaged adults send their children (materials kits can be left in homerooms for the children to take home)
- private homes
- barber shops and beauty shops
- low income housing projects
- bookmobile routes to disadvantaged areas

From the list of potential locations, choose the ones most likely to be used.

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The next step is to contact someone at each location to arrange to place the collections.

Contacting Possible Hosts

After making tentative decisions about where to place deposit collections, the library should contact the agencies, organizations, and businesses it has listed to get their permission and make arrangements to install the collections. Some proprietors and agency representatives may be reluctant to accept collections for fear of being held responsible for materials or having to keep records. The library staff member who makes these contacts should explain the purpose and the mechanics of the collection clearly, and should make all the necessary arrangements and agreements before any collections are installed.

A library representative should call or visit the contact person and make the following points:

Explain the purpose of the deposit collection as an extension of the public library's attempts to provide information to people who cannot afford to buy it for themselves.

Describe the materials the deposit collection will contain.

Explain that the responsibility for the collection is the library's, and not that of the proprietor or agency.

Tell them whether the material can be borrowed or is to be used on site.

Explain the library's plans for maintaining the deposit collection.

The library and the establishment should come to an agreement about where the collection will be placed inside the establishment, how much space it will take, and how and on what it will be displayed. A large space would be needed to hold copies of pamphlets to be given away, a smaller space for a special collection of materials to be used on site. Classrooms may have bookcases available, but the library will probably have to provide racks for deposit collections in businesses and other agencies.

ASSEMBLING THE COLLECTION

Knowing where the deposit collections will be placed makes it possible to select materials that will be appropriate for each location. The library staff members who prepare deposit collections must know the needs and interests of the disadvantaged adults they are serving.

Finding Information Needs

One way to determine those needs and interests is to use the Appalachian Adult Education Center's *Coping Skills Categories* as a list of subject headings. To learn specific needs, talk to the disadvantaged adults themselves. Another method, which could be combined with making arrangements with establishments to place the collections, is to ask the opinions of the proprietors and agency representatives the library identified when looking for possible locations for deposits. The library staff member who contacts those representatives could also ask them which categories of information they believe would be most useful to the disadvantaged adults they know, and which categories they believe the adult clients would be most receptive to when they are visiting that particular place. A collection to be placed in a factory lunchroom, for example, should be designed for the people who work there, just as one to be placed in an adult basic education classroom should contain materials especially selected for that

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group. The most important considerations are to choose materials that deal with adult concerns (such as those reflected in the coping skill categories) at reading levels not too difficult for the undereducated adult.

Planning Special Collections

One alternative is to rotate a group of deposit collections among several locations. Materials for each collection could be centered around a particular subject area such as "Marriage," "Children," or "Health." Each collection would have as many materials as possible on the same subject but on varied levels of difficulty, so the individual could choose for himself the reading level he needed. Many of the materials might be acquired from other agencies, such as health and agriculture departments, and be available free from the deposit collections.

Materials selection for deposit collections, then, should be based on the needs and interests of the disadvantaged adults who will use them, determined from the library's knowledge of the community, conversations with potential users, and conversations with proprietors, employers, and social agency personnel where the collections will be placed.

Delivering the Collections

After selecting locations, making arrangements, selecting materials, and acquiring racks or bookcases for display, the library staff should be ready to deliver the collections. Here are suggested steps:

Assemble the materials in one place and label each collection by destination.

Collect the display racks or bookcases to be taken to the sites.

Get boxes to move the materials. Used packing boxes from the library, grocery stores, or shoe stores will do. Small boxes are needed for home kits. Boxes can also be ordered, and prices vary with the quantity.

A station wagon, truck, or bookmobile can deliver the materials, depending on the quantity and size of the racks. The library staff will have to transport the materials and set up the displays.

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MAINTAINING THE COLLECTION

Nothing looks more uninviting than a sparse collection of worn materials in a neglected rack. Deposit collections can't be installed and then forgotten. The library staff should be prepared to maintain the collections and should reach an understanding on how and when it will be done before the collections are placed.

The following are suggestions for maintaining the collections.

Schedule regular visits to check the condition of materials. Replace lost and worn paperbacks and pamphlets. Keep the display clean and attractive. The host of the collection should feel free to call the library about needs or problems.

Find out what materials are being used. Replace little-used items with popular ones. Ask the users and the hosts what other topics they think would be of interest and choose new materials based on their suggestions.

Remove out-of-date newspapers and magazines. An attractive up-to-date deposit collection shows that the library is seriously interested in providing this service, and appeals to the users as well as to the hosts, who do not want their places of business cluttered with shabby, worn-out newspapers and paperbacks.

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Provide instructions for borrowing material. A leaflet would serve the purpose, directing users to sign a card and leave it on the rack or bookcase, and where to return the material. Some libraries encourage borrowers to return the material to a branch library, a good way to introduce them to the branch. The library may decide not to keep formal circulation data but to let users return a book when they take another.

Rotating deposit collections among their locations makes them accessible to more people and gives the regular deposit collection a periodic new look.

COSTS

Costs depend on the kind of deposit collection. Three types—with widely varying price tags—are described below.

From the General Collection. Deposits of books, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, records, games, films, and filmstrips can be made up from the library's general collection or collection of special materials for disadvantaged adults, and rotated and restocked based on student interests and needs. Costs would be included in the library's regular materials budget.

Approximate Cost: About $50 per Collection

Paperback and Pamphlet Collections. These require constant replacing, since they are subject to early wear or are given away. But most of this material is free or inexpensive.

Approximate Cost: About $15 per Collection

Home Kits. Small collections, or home kits should contain easy reading paperbacks and pamphlets for disadvantaged adults, and story books for their children. The home kit should have family appeal and should contain leisure reading for adults and children as well as pamphlets on daily life problems

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such as health, family planning, child rearing, nutrition, and budgeting. Home kits can be distributed by the bookmobile, from the library, or through the home rooms of school students who can take them home to their parents.

Approximate Cost: $5 per Kit.

WHAT OTHER LIBRARIES HAVE DONE

Libraries across the country have used deposit collections successfully. The idea is not new. In the 1930's the Works Projects Administration provided deposit collections of books and pamphlets in many counties that had no information resources. During World War II, War Information Centers provided survival information at the county level. The Tennessee Valley Authority's educational program provided "book boxes" to construction camps. Deposit collections have become very popular with public libraries all over the country, and most large libraries have deposit collections.

Since it is sometimes helpful to visit a library which as a successful program before beginning a similar one, it might be a good idea to call the state library for information. They can identify a library of similar size and with similar user groups which library staff members might visit for more ideas.

The following are some recent successful public library efforts to provide deposit collections for disadvantaged adults.

Alabama Public Library Service

APLS provided the materials and the adult basic education program provided denim bags for book bags for a "home book collection." The kits, passed out to adult basic education students and other

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	interested readers, contained material on a wide variety of subjects and at various reading levels. Response from the students was excellent.	**Chicago Public Library**	The Special Extension Service of the Chicago Public Library has been serving disadvantaged persons for the past five years by placing deposit collections in agencies working with the disadvantaged, in classrooms, and in youth centers. The library provides services to 485 groups and organizations with whom it has written agreements covering handling and maintenance of materials. The library offers training to the agency staffs providing library services to their clients.
Brooklyn Public Library	The famous "3-B's" project placed deposits in bars, barber shops, and beauty parlors in disadvantaged neighborhoods, and put collections of paperback reference books in popular neighborhood locations. The material was used at the locations, rather than circulated. Some titles used were: – *The World Almanac* – *Consumer Reports Buying Guide* – *The Compact Bible* – *Basic Dictionary of American English* – *The ABC'S of Beauty* – *What Shall We Name the Baby?* – *The Club Member's Handbook* – *Double your Reading Speed* – *Baseball's Hall of Fame* – *Guinness Book of World Records*	**Cleveland Public Library**	Classroom sets of up-to-date materials in adult basic education classes were very successful.
		Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore	Deposit collections of paperbacks, magazines, ready reference materials, and recreational reading were set up in community action centers to serve disadvantaged adults. These circulating collections also included materials on jobs, literacy, high school equivalency tests, and educational games for children.
		Newark (New Jersey) Public Library	The Newark Public Library placed a collection in the tutoring center of a housing project, and provided instruction on how to use the materials.

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Putnam County Adult Learning Center Hurricane, West Virginia	A rotating collection of materials placed at the learning center were available for ABE students to take home.		

SUGGESTED READINGS

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LIBRARY SERVICE GUIDES

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2. Assessing Community Information and Service Needs
3. Using Pamphlets with Disadvantaged Adults
4. Deposit Collections of Special Materials for Disadvantaged Adults
5. Utilizing Volunteers in Expanding Library Services to Disadvantaged Adults
6. Books By Mail Services: Moving the Library to Disadvantaged Adults
7. Evening and Weekend Library Services for Disadvantaged Adults
8. The Library as a Community Information and Referral Center
9. Planning the Expansion of Library Services to Disadvantaged Adults
10. Working with Library Trustees to Expand Library Services to Disadvantaged Adults
11. Reader Guidance Services for Disadvantaged Adults
12. The Recruitment of Disadvantaged Adults: Effective Publicity
13. Conducting Tours to the Library for Groups of Disadvantaged Adults
14. ABE—What Is It?
15. The Relationship of Disadvantagement to Library Services
16. In-service Training of Personnel to Serve Disadvantaged Adults
17. Adult Education in the Library: ABE, GED, CLEP, and the Open University
18. Book Talks: Encouraging Library Materials Usage by Disadvantaged Adults
19. Techniques for Teachers: Teaching the Application of Basic Skills to Everyday Life Problems
20. Displaying Materials for Disadvantaged Adults
21. Bookmobile Services: Moving the Library to Disadvantaged Adults
22. Expanding Library Services to the Elderly
23. Using Audiovisuals With Disadvantaged Adults
24. Expanding Library Services to the Institutionalized
25. Interagency Cooperation: The Public Library and Agencies that Serve Disadvantaged Adults
26. Adjusting School Libraries for Use by Disadvantaged Adults
27. Speakers Bureaus for Disadvantaged Adults
28. Maintaining Separate Collections of Library Materials for Disadvantaged Adults
29. Client Participation in Expanding Library Services to Disadvantaged Adults
30. The Role of the College Library in the Education of Disadvantaged Adults
31. Public Library Services to Young Disadvantaged Adults
32. Working with Elected Officials to Expand Library Services to Disadvantaged Adults

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